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RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0649
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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1425
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 2700
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1817
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 1209
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000787

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SUBJECT: CHAD: WISE MEN'S CHAIR MALLOUM SEEKS GUIDANCE

REF: NDJAMENA 778

Classified By: POL/ECON OFFICER MICHAEL P. ZORICK, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY:

1. (C) The Chair of President Deby's Committee of Wise Men on political dialogue does not see any indication from the President or his opposition of the political will necessary for compromise and reconciliation. He hopes that international pressure will bring Deby to understand the need for real reform, but fears that a vacuum in confidence will keep the various sides from even being able to launch any serious dialogue. END SUMMARY

2. (C) President Idriss Deby Itno told AF DAS Yamamoto May 30 that he had created a 30-person Committee of Wise Men (Comite des Sages), under the chairmanship of the former Chadian President, General Felice Malloum, that would present him as soon as 2 June with proposals for structuring a political dialogue (reftel). Ambassador met with Malloum on June 3 to find out what the eminent Chadian politician believed could be accomplished by the committee he chairs.

NO REAL INSTRUCTIONS

3. (C) Malloum made it clear that he had essentially no idea what President Deby expected of him or the Wise Men's Committee. Deby had received Malloum roughly a week before, apparently at Malloum's request for a discussion of what Deby might intend coming out of the May 3 election. Malloum said Deby had charged him at that meeting to head up "a small organ" to propose political initiatives. Malloum stated that, far from giving the President any proposals at the end of the previous week, he had met only a few of the other committee members, whom he called "MSP (ruling party) cadres."

4. (C) Malloum stressed that, at this time, there is simply no vestige of confidence left among the politically active Chadians that must be part of a national dialogue. He pointed out that, in such a climate, it would be irrelevant what Deby claimed to be willing to undertake in terms of reforms or policies -- his interlocutors simply would not

believe him. Malloum asked whether a dialogue would be possible when the starting point -- a willingness to accept each others' legitimacy, and to compromise -- is out of reach. He said that, although the President had asked for his recommendations, he has made no commitment to accept them -- "If he refuses our ideas, what then?"

CORNER SUDAN WITH PEACEKEEPERS

¶15. (C) Discussing Chad's external security situation, Malloum noted that Chad's 45 years of unstable nationhood had always been linked to "unfriendly neighbors". He viewed the USG's new relationship with Tripoli as potentially helpful, calling Sudan Chad's most dangerous influence, and pointed to China's support for Khartoum versus N'Djamena's relationship with Taiwan as a problem in UN Security Council deliberations on Darfur and Chad. Malloum noted three important elements in dealing with Eastern Chad and Darfur: (a) obtaining Sudanese acceptance of a UN PKO in Darfur; (b) providing real political support to the AU's efforts; and (c) understanding where Chadian elements in rebel groups destabilizing Darfur ended, and Sudanese elements in rebel groups destabilizing Chad began. Malloum returned repeatedly to the need for strong external pressure on Sudan to halt its interference in Chad, as well as on Deby to pull back from his winner-takes-all attitude to politics.

¶16. (C) Ambassador made it clear that, while the USG and the international community were ready to help where they had value to add in Chad's internal political process, it would require first a clear indication of political will on the part of Chadians. Malloum responded that he did not see

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indications of that will, and hoped that it would be the international community that would encourage Chadians to cooperate with each other.

COMMENT

¶17. (C) Malloum came off as a true wise man -- certainly wise enough to know when he has been set up to fail. We do not see much coming from his committee. We are especially taken by his point that, in a confidence vacuum, there is no starting point for political dialogue that can lead to the kinds of reforms needed for a peaceful future in Chad. END
COMMENT

¶18. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.
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